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literalisms, superstitions, and falsities that too often characterize conventional teaching. Chapter x discusses "The Moral Life in the Light of Immortality."

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A CONTRIBUTION TO BIOGRAPHY¹

To a discriminating reading public Stopford Brooke is known as the author of two famous books, the life of F. W. Robertson, *Robertson of Brighton*, and the *Primer of English Literature*. The life of Robertson, published in 1865, when its author was in the early thirties, was nothing less than an event in theological circles, a portent, a calamity. It was most cordially welcomed by the Broad Church, while the "evangelical" newspapers heaped abuse impartially upon biography and biographer. It attained at once a large sale and is still a widely influential book. Of the *Primer*, published ten years later, hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold. More than once revised by its author, it has been translated into many languages and is regarded today as the clearest, the most judicious, and the most readable guide to English literature which has yet appeared. The claim of Brooke's many other books—sermons, poems, literary history, and criticism—charming as they are in style and affluent in content, was never urgent, and what vogue they once possessed is now rapidly passing. To his family and his intimate friends, however, Stopford Brooke, the maker of books and the eloquent preacher, was to the end of his life not merely an immensely interesting, but ever a surprising, personality. No one quite understood him. James Martineau once said of him enigmatically that he never grew up. Five days before his death, in his eighty-fourth year, Brooke wrote to a friend, "I love fullness and satisfaction, even though I am certain of the passing of fullness into decay. Perhaps I think I shall never live to see decay." His biographer does not profess to explain him.

Dr. Jacks refers more than once to Brooke's "multiple personality," at once Christian, pagan, mystic, artist, preacher, poet, in language which leaves the reader wondering what has been left unsaid that might possibly furnish a clue to his perplexity. In particular the chapter entitled "The Myth of the Three Springs" presents, as Dr. Jacks

¹*Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*. By Lawrence Pearsall Jacks. Two volumes. New York: Scribner, 1917. x+350 pages; vii+368 pages. \$4.75.

confesses, "a conundrum that must be left to the psychologists to solve." We may pass by the perplexities of a "double nature" whose Christian and Greek tendencies were reconciled "by the mediating power of an impassioned love of beauty in all its forms, both natural and spiritual," to turn to plainer matters. Stopford Brooke was a descendant of preachers. There is no evidence, although his early home was "saturated with the spirit of evangelical piety" which expects religious "experiences," that there was ever a spiritual crisis, clearly marked in date and circumstance, through which he received a "call" to the ministry. He was naturally religious, and as he came to manhood he recognized and accepted his vocation clearly and confidently, a vocation, however, not merely to preach but to preach in London. After two brief curacies and a residence of eighteen months in Berlin as chaplain to the English Embassy, a period of restlessness and dissatisfaction, with a measure of compensation in the acquaintance then formed with the Crown Princess and the Princess Alice, which led later to his appointment as chaplain to Queen Victoria, he found his opportunity at last to preach in London as minister of the Proprietary Chapel of St. James. It was an independent position, which enabled him to "speak his mind" in "revolutionary sermons," if he so pleased, in courageous indifference to his chances of promotion and the attacks of the Low Church newspapers. For Brooke had been from his first appearance in the pulpit identified with the Broad Church party. It is amusing enough today to learn that London vicary shook their heads doubtfully over the would-be curate who was friend of Dean Stanley and found edification in Martineau's *Endeavors After the Christian Life* and a distinctly religious content in such mere literature as "In Memoriam" and "The Prelude."

As minister of St. James for nine years, and later at Bedford Chapel for twenty years, Brooke was known as one of the most distinguished preachers of London. His congregations were always large, and his serene and confident message peculiarly acceptable to cultivated men and women seeking a foundation upon which to build a spiritual faith, but completely indifferent to dogma and disputation. "Through all the theological storms and the inward conflicts thence resulting, which lay so heavily on many of his Mid-Victorian contemporaries," says Dr. Jacks, "Brooke went on his way radiant and rejoicing, his soul unshaken by any doubts of his destiny, undarkened by any eclipse of faith."

He had been minister of Bedford Chapel five years when in 1880 Brooke suddenly resigned his orders in the Church of England. Neither

outwardly nor inwardly did this step mark a "crisis" in his history. He lost no friends. He retained his pulpit and with few exceptions his congregation. Public interest was aroused, of course, but there was no bitter criticism, and discussion of this notable recession soon ended. There were no clergymen to follow his example. Brooke himself apparently felt no sharp pain when necessity was laid upon him, and never regretted what he had done. His brothers and sisters, however, were deeply grieved, and his father carried the sorrow to his grave. Many years later Brooke wrote in his diary, "I did regret that my father had suffered for it, But what else could I have done? A man must do what he must do."

It has been maliciously said of Stopford Brooke that "he could change his religion as another man could change his tie"; but in fact, in resigning his orders he did not change his religion. It was only that he refused any longer to give a formal assent to creeds which he had never in his heart accepted. The doctrine of the incarnation, as he understood the church to hold it, the "Eternal Punishment business and the personality of the devil," the miraculous element in Christianity—long ago these things had ceased, for him, to be really believable, and the time came inevitably when he could no longer reconcile his conscience to the continued profession of belief in them.

In leaving the Church of England, however, he did not, as was commonly thought, become a Unitarian. His resignation of orders left him for the rest of his life with no church affiliation or denominational standing whatever. He simply refused ecclesiastical classification. His purpose was in no way controversial or destructive. His heart was set rather upon "building people up in the faith in Christ." "I hope to show," he said, "that I am no less a Christian, no less a believer in Christ as the Master and Saviour of Mankind than before." Brooke preached frequently in Unitarian pulpits. He had many friends among Unitarians, and many points of agreement with them; but the worship of the Unitarian Churches left him cold. "I do not like the Non-conformist services," he said, "I can't stand the extemporaneous prayers, like leading articles addressed to God." He continued after his secession to employ in the worship of Bedford Chapel the ritual of the Church of England, with the not unimportant modifications demanded by his rejection of creeds. "Take all that the church has of ritual which does not conflict with the great truths," he wrote to a correspondent, "use it, modify it, add to it more and richer symbolism, and make the service of God rush like a gay river of joy."

We may as well give over the attempt to label Stopford Brooke or to "place him" among scientific thinkers. He was neither theologian nor philosopher. "He had committed himself to the way of the poets in the search for truth," says his biographer; and if his processes appeared romantic and emotional rather than logical, the result to him was profoundly satisfying. God is love. The ultimate right is union with God. The ultimate wrong is alienation from God. Upon this foundation he rested, with a settled peace and joy, to the end of his life.

The reader is told at the outset that Stopford Brooke was more than a preacher, more than a student and critic of literature — he was a poet and an artist. His nature demanded that truth should be brought into harmony with beauty, and this demand bore a large part in his revolt from the atmosphere of evangelicalism in which he was reared. His passion for art was early awakened and persistent. His biographer has much to say of his many visits to Italy, his keen delight in its galleries, his friendships with artists, his successful practice of landscape painting taken up late in life, his home in London, crowded with works of art — "there was hardly a fragment of available space that did not contain or exhibit some beautiful thing." It is all very puzzling, as one reflects upon it. It helps little to be told that one side of his nature belonged to religion, the other to art. Which was the real Stopford Brooke? What was the supreme, the controlling interest in his life? Dr. Jacks would satisfy the reader with the assurance that Brooke was a "multiple personality." But the reader turns these delightful pages, led on by a hope, in the end unsatisfied, that he will yet find some definite summing up of the significance and value of Brooke's life, his abiding influence upon men, his contribution to the religious thought of today, his peculiar service to the church of Christ. An alluring, charming narrative, no doubt; but does one really discover by its help Stopford Brooke himself?

A sentence in the brief account of his funeral is at least suggestive. "On the coffin lay a drapery of rich colors, covered with old Italian embroidery; and the whole room was filled with light and beauty."

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